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ABSTRACT

This study investigated inner-city middle school teachers' perceptions of the importance of time in learning and sharing information. Participating teachers were involved in a technology demonstration project, the Educators' Electronic Learning Community (EELC). Participants completed pre-interview surveys that had them rate their technological skills and ability to incorporate technology into instruction before and after participating in EELC. The survey identified ways that teachers shared what they had learned and discussed factors that helped or hindered them in sharing. Teacher interviews examined: knowledge, skills, and insights gained by participating in the EELC; methods used to share learning with colleagues; and factors affecting their ability to share what they learned. Teachers completed a post-interview survey, rating the strength of motivating and restraining factors and ranking their relative importance. Five important barriers to sharing all related to time: feeling overwhelmed; lack of discretionary time to learn; lack of discretionary time to share with colleagues; lack of common time; and lack of a designated time for sharing. Four other aspects of time also hindered learning and dissemination of learning to peers: lack of uninterrupted time; lack of unpressured time; lack of renewal time; and habitual time. (Contains 35 references.) (SM)

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"I Don't Have Enough Time": Teachers' Interpretations of Time as a Key to Learning and School Change

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"I Don't Have Enough Time": Teachers' Interpretations of Time as a Key to Learning and School Change

> *I need time to deliberate with my colleagues. Time to sit down and plan together. Time to tell stories about what has worked with kids. Time to share ideas. Time to discuss team teaching. Time to collaborate. Time, time, time. (Hamel, 2000)*

In almost any body of literature about school reform and restructuring, time is one of the greatest constraints to any change process, whether at the individual, classroom, or school level (e.g., Cambone, 1995; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Kruse, Louis, & Byrk, 1995; Little, 1987). As Fullan and Miles (1992) noted, "Every analysis of the problems of change efforts that we have seen in the last decade of research and practice has concluded that time is the most salient issue" (p. 750). Consequently, numerous articles have been written to suggest strategies for changing school schedules and practices in order to find time for teachers to participate in school improvement efforts (Canaday & Rettig, 1995; Donahoe, 1993; National Educational Commission on Time and Learning, 1994; Raywid, 1993; Watts & Castle, 1993). Most of the proposed strategies for finding time fit within five broad categories: freed-up time, rescheduled or restructured time, common time, better use of time, and purchased time.

Few studies, however, have explored teachers' interpretations of time—what teachers mean when they say, "I don't have enough time," or whether reallocating scheduled time will provide teachers with the kinds of time they need to become more active in school reform efforts. With few exceptions (Cambone, 1995; Campbell, 1985; Hargreaves, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989), time is presented as a single factor rather than as a multi-faceted and complex concept.

Further, "found" time is often devoted to workshops intended to promote individual learning and encourage classroom change. This may not be the kind of time that is needed for organizational learning or school change. Shaw and Perkins (1992) defined organizational learning as the "capacity of an organization to gain insight from its own experience and the experience of others and to modify the way it functions according to such insight" (p. 175). Learning organizations therefore seek to ensure that individual learning enriches and enhances the organization as a whole (Kerka, 1995; also see Fullan, 1991). While there can be no organizational learning without individual learning, organizational learning is more than the sum of the individual learning of organizational members. The difference between individual learning and organizational learning is like the "difference between a bunch of individuals who are good basketball players and an outstanding basketball team" (Senge as cited in O'Neil, 1995, p. 20).

For organizational learning to occur, teachers need time to interact with colleagues in order to discuss and disseminate (share) their learning (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989). The reality in many schools, however, is that teachers have little time to interact with colleagues (Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975) and they are not expected to disseminate what they know or learn (Little, 1987). "In the absence of opportunities to interact, theories of organizational learning would predict a low capacity for change and development" (Louis, 1994, p. 6). Thus it is no surprise that "there's very little sense of collective learning going on in most schools" (Senge as cited in O'Neil, 1995, p. 20).

Treating time as a linear, uniform concept may result in misdirected administrative effort and lack of meaningful teacher participation in individual

or organizational learning. "Simply finding more time for teachers will not induce the restructured schools we desire. ...Reformers have limited the meaning of time for teachers and thereby missed important avenues for restructuring schools" (Cambone, 1995, p. 538).

This paper indicates that the concept of time is more complex and dynamic than the literature implies. The paper elaborates and illustrates nine aspects of time that teachers in a middle school instructional technology project identified as barriers to the dissemination of learning among colleagues. The findings have implications for scheduling and planning, professional development, school change, and further understanding of how organizational learning occurs.

Background of the Study

The paper is drawn from a larger qualitative study that explored how individual teachers' learning in a middle school instructional technology project was disseminated to other organizational members and how it supported organizational learning. The study also investigated forces that fostered or inhibited dissemination of teachers' learning. In examining teachers' perceptions of inhibiting forces, the issue of time was so prominent that it merited separate consideration.

The study was part of a larger, five-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Technology Challenge Grant Program. The Educators' Electronic Learning Community (EELC, a pseudonym) was a technology demonstration project representing a joint effort of a metropolitan school system and a neighboring land grant institution, along with several private sector partners. The EELC project was conducted in three inner city

middle schools—Maple Middle School, Oak Middle School, and Sycamore Elementary and Middle School (pseudonyms). The three schools served disadvantaged students and were under pressure to improve their academic performance scores or risk being "reconstituted" by the state. However, the schools were selected because they had on-going technology initiatives, administrative support, and a high level of teacher interest in the project.

The sample of voluntary participants for this study included all 10 of the teachers who remained as classroom teachers in these three schools throughout the initial years of the project (see Table 1). Participants first replied to a pre-interview survey that solicited background information and asked them to rate their technological skills and their ability to incorporate technology into instruction before/after participating in EELC. The survey also identified ways in which the teachers shared what they had learned and sought open-ended responses concerning factors that helped or hindered them in sharing their learning. The participants then engaged in a semi-structured interview that generally lasted 1 - 1 1/2 hours. The interview focused on three areas: knowledge, skills, and insights teachers gained by participating in the EELC project; methods used to share learning with colleagues; and factors affecting teachers' ability to share what they had learned. Finally, participants completed a post-interview survey in which they rated the strength of motivating and restraining factors, and then ranked their relative importance. The factors (43 motivating factors, 36 restraining factors) were compiled from the pre-interview surveys and interviews. Other data sources included a document review of project materials for background information, observations, field notes, and notes taken at meetings and workshops.

Data analysis was an inductive and iterative process. The pre-interview survey was coded and used to personalize the interview questions and inform the post-interview survey. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Coding and categorizing began with the first transcripts and continued concurrently with data collection. The research questions provided initial categories for the first level of coding. After initial categories were refined and as sub-themes and patterns emerged, data were reexamined for counter examples, unanticipated categories, new patterns, and alternative explanations. Observations and notes were used to confirm, disconfirm, compare, or further explore interview responses with teachers' behavior and comments during meetings. Force-field analysis (Lewin, 1951) of the results of the post-interview surveys was used to construct a more complete picture of the dynamic environment influencing teachers' dissemination of their learning with a view to understanding how dissemination can be encouraged. Accuracy of meaning and interpretations, as well as appropriateness of illustrative teacher quotes, was confirmed or corrected through participant member checks and peer feedback.

Nine Aspects of Time Affecting Teacher Sharing

The teachers in the EELC project echoed a familiar refrain in the literature: teachers do not have enough time. This study explored what teachers mean when they say, "I don't have enough time." The teachers in the study identified and elaborated nine aspects of time. Of the 36 identified restraining factors to sharing, the five most important barriers were all aspects of time: feeling overwhelmed, lack of discretionary time to learn, lack of discretionary time to share with colleagues, lack of common time, and lack of a designated time for sharing. The teachers also mentioned four other aspects of time that hinder their

learning and the dissemination of their learning to peers. These barriers are lack of uninterrupted time, lack of unpressured time, lack of renewal time, and habitual time.

Feeling overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed is not foreign to teachers in general, especially at certain times of the academic year. The build-up of demands on their time eventually feels like an overpowering mountain of work. For the teachers involved in the EELC project, sharing with school colleagues was particularly difficult because they felt "so swamped" (Betty) and "so stretched [as a result of] the intensity...with this state takeover" (Nancy). Jessie noted that feeling overwhelmed can make teachers less receptive to new information and insights. "A lot of times, people don't want to do more than what they have to do. It's already a huge burden to begin with."

While the sense of uneasiness and added paperwork from the impending state takeover contributed to teachers feeling overwhelmed at school, several noted that their personal situations also demanded additional time. Nancy wrote, "This is a very complicated time for me because my school is in transition and I am taking classes for re-certification." Betty explained, "I want to do an excellent job and my daughter's illness complicates EELC for me." Ellen, perhaps the most active learner with the most collegial contacts, was also "feeling a bit overwhelmed" and said she was taking a break from working with technology to focus more on helping her son with his college essays.

Lack of discretionary time to learn about the technology. Discretionary time refers to time when teachers are free from scheduled responsibilities and can decide what to do. The teachers in this study made a distinction between a lack of discretionary time to learn and a lack of discretionary time to share.

Many of them saw learning as a precondition for sharing. Teachers varied in their learning from knowing little about technology to feeling comfortable with it. For example, Irene confessed that although she was "really enthusiastic" about the technology, "I really haven't had time to share too much of anything because I really haven't done anything." Donna commented that she needed more time to learn because "I am not that comfortable [with using the technology]. Even though I am better than many co-workers, I have not reached that comfort level."

Once the teachers felt comfortable with the technology, they wanted discretionary time to find resources, develop lessons, and work through ideas and strategies on their own before sharing with others. Karen described that challenge as "how to basically find the time to look at what needs to be taught [and consider] how I can fine-tune this information either on the CDs or on the Internet [and then] to find the time to surf the Net."

Additionally, things do not always go as planned with technology. Learning can seem "too time-consuming and many times it ends up [being] unproductive" (Donna). Because of constant time constraints, teachers tend to be especially sensitive to "unproductive" or "wasted" time:

> I found the sites and I had the material, and I came into class and the system was down. That took over an hour of my time that could have seemed wasted. And again, teachers don't have much time and to also incorporate this component into that time—it takes a back seat. What happens is, if it takes a back seat, nothing's going to get done. (Henry)

Blocks of discretionary time can spur learning, either individually or with others. Without these blocks, "there is such a lack of time, you're limited as to what you learn or what you share with someone else" (Donna). However, when teachers like Donna have discretionary time, they feel excited: "If you have the

time, there is so much that you can do!" In addition to creating excitement, having enough discretionary time can also motivate teachers to learn and share with others:

> During the summer, I had the time to sit down and relax and be calm and work and work and work on [integrating the technology into instruction], and that really, really motivated me. Then I had the chance to talk with the other project people in the building; you know, we shared and shared. "What do you have in your module? What do you have in this? What do you have in that?" And it really kept me going, going, going! (Michael)

Lack of discretionary time to share with other teachers. Regardless of whether the teachers in this study initially preferred to learn on their own or in concert with others, they not only saw sharing with colleagues as a way to increase their learning, but they also viewed their own learning as worthy of sharing with colleagues. "Call it interest, enthusiasm, or whatever else...that would motivate people to share whatever it is that they have" (Irene). Karen noted that "if you find something that works well and captures a student's attention, then you want to share it."

Although motivation to share did not appear to be a problem, lack of discretionary time clearly was. Teachers rarely have much discretionary time to share their learning with colleagues. Their schedules are generally set by administrators and the vast majority of their time involves working with 25-150 students. During their "free time"—in this study, a 30-minute lunch break and perhaps a planning period—teachers have scheduled responsibilities including team meetings, ARD meetings, parent conferences, meetings with students, responsibility for moving students from one place to another, and in some cases, responsibility for supervising the lunch room. In the little discretionary time left to them, teachers attend to pressing matters such as eating, preparing for the next

class, calling parents, and trying to keep up with paperwork. Betty summarized the dilemma:

> When we're exposed to things, we share. It's no good keeping it all to yourself. You've got to share it. So we just do the best we can with that [but]...there's really no time to do that. We're in meetings on Tuesdays, meetings on Thursdays when we have our planning. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays [are] open for parent conferences or emergency meetings by the team. If you have that time,...you might be planning a special lesson. I'm a chemistry teacher. I have to take the time to set up labs sometimes. You're pulled in a million different ways to try to do a good job.

Lack of common time with other teachers. Even if teachers have discretionary time as individuals, they may lack common time when two or more are free to talk or share. Common time relates to the concept of scheduled, non-instructional time for at least two teachers at the same time during the school day. For example, because of block scheduling, Irene had the unusual circumstance of a double planning period and therefore felt that she had plenty of discretionary time. However, she still felt limited in her capacity to share with other teachers because of a lack of common time: "We don't have sharing time. We have plenty of [discretionary] time. Like this year, we have more time than we've ever had, but we don't have common time."

Like other American teachers, few of these teachers' activities on a daily basis involved contact with other adults (Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975). The teachers also noted that there is rarely time for any in-depth or sustained sharing with colleagues. "Lack of time prevents teachers from sharing, because teachers are unable to sit down during the day together. ...Basically, [the only time] they can do it is before or after school" (Henry). Time before school is usually occupied with preparation for classes. Getting together with colleagues after

school is difficult too: "I stay late, they leave [earlier]. Once you leave here, that's it. So we don't have time to share" (Donna).

Lack of common time was a frequent theme among the teachers in this study. Only Henry and Irene at Oak Middle School and Carl and Donna at Sycamore enjoyed scheduled common time because of team teaching. Otherwise, Nancy's observation that teachers "don't really get to see each other because of different floors, different routines, and different schedules" was echoed by her peers. "We don't get time to talk, to share, because when they're free, we have classes" (Donna). "You just don't see people, because they're all on different time schedules. They eat lunch at a different time, they meet at a different time, so it's really hard to share" (Betty).

A compounding factor concerning lack of common time with other teachers was a lack of knowledge about when other teachers are free to meet. The teachers do not receive the master schedule for their school:

> We used to get a master schedule where we knew everybody's schedule. But they don't do that anymore. ... So your whole day is just scheduled in for you and it's just like you go in your little cubby hole and do whatever you're going to do, and when it's over, you go out. (Irene)

Jessie noted that in her school, "the only way you know about somebody else's schedule is if you ask them. ...You don't get everybody's schedule; you only get a schedule for your team." She suggested that perhaps a master schedule was not given out because of concerns that "You'd have people saying, 'Well, wait a minute, this person only has two classes.' " But, she added, that type of behavior would only be a problem "if you are that concerned with what somebody else has instead of what you have. ...It is easy to share with others with common goals and coordinating schedules."

Lack of time designated specifically for sharing with other teachers. Designated time refers to time with a structured process for learning with and from colleagues. Teachers in the study talked about the value of having a designated time to share with one another as individuals, with colleagues in the school, and with teachers from other schools.

At the individual level, Henry and Tom "both feel bad" about not having had enough time to help other project teachers who sought their assistance to set up equipment:

> It just takes time. Everything takes time. And it's not something that either of us have much of right now. And if it could be incorporated into our day, where we could have 45 minutes when we could help, we'd be more than [happy] to. But we've got so many things going on that we haven't been able to help other people get set up.

Within each school, designated time was not a given. Donna commented that "because we don't have faculty meetings that often, I may not see some of the people in this building for weeks. Months go by [and] I may not see them, unless I just happen to come across them." In general, sharing with and learning from colleagues is simply not an expectation, so designated time is "not built into your schedule...If it were built in, yeah [we'd share]. But it's just not built in" (Nancy). Without designated times, "there are no opportunities as a staff during the day or professional development [sessions] to share best practices" (Henry). As a result, "few [teachers] do, because they are not 'obligated' " (Irene).

The teachers appeared to want designated time because they recognize its potential for learning and believe "a lot could be accomplished if you had a designated time" (Betty).

> We can all learn from each other, but there has to be a...time set up and a process where we can collaborate, basically. I really don't think it's going to happen through osmosis as much as you'd like it. There are teachers all

> over the building, and even though we're in this project—if there was a set-up time [when] we could meet for the specific purpose of helping each other out with the technology, I think we'd learn the most. (Henry)

Without designated time for learning and sharing, there can be a haphazard quality to dissemination of information and ideas among teachers within the same school. When several schools are involved, sharing can almost disappear. Michael said bluntly, "I don't have the time to communicate with other teachers...especially not with teachers outside the building at another place." Nevertheless, the teachers recognize the irony: "There's a school right up the street four or five blocks, you know, and it's sad because I know that would be a way to...grow, but there is no time" (Irene).

Lack of uninterrupted time. Even when teachers have discretionary time during planning periods or after school, they are frequently interrupted by students, other teachers, administrators, or parents. By contrast, uninterrupted time is "quality time...where you actually have a half hour to focus only on one [topic]...It is just a structured block of time that you can devote purely to one thing" (Karen).

Comments from some teachers in this study suggest that because time is so often interrupted, sharing among teachers tends to be informal, specific, and brief. Teachers often have to make do with quick sound bites or hints rather than extended discussions or demonstrations. Carl explained, "Whenever I catch Ellen, it's either I got to hurry up and maybe question her, or vice versa. It's like always on the go." Opportunities for in-depth learning, detailed explanations, or shared reflections appear to be rare. Under these kinds of circumstances, teachers' learning and sharing tends to remain superficial; they may give another

teacher a Web site address but not spend the time to explain how they have used it or how their students reacted to it.

Lack of unpressured time. Unpressured time is time to learn and share, free from the pressure of other immediate needs and priorities. However, many of the teachers in this study found that they sometimes had more responsibilities than they could attend to in a given day. The pressure to meet curriculum and bureaucratic demands of the school, preparation and management needs of the classroom, and individual intellectual and social needs of their students limited teachers' ability to find time for learning and sharing. The teachers described feeling that, like the Red Queen in "Through the Looking Glass" (Carroll, 1871/1960), they have to run as fast as they can merely to stay in the same place. For example, the teachers at Sycamore did not "see how you could possibly have any time to do anything else except for what you're supposed to be doing every day" (Betty).

Under pressure, people tend to revert to what they know best. They lack time to prioritize and tend to assume a reactive position, responding instead to the most urgent needs rather than focusing on what is most important. Under pressure, teachers' discretionary time is likely to be spent dealing with the most pressing responsibilities and deadlines instead of learning and sharing new ideas for improving teaching.

Lack of renewal time. Renewal time relates to the concept of time for rejuvenation. In many workplaces, short breaks are written into union contracts because they are thought to increase employee productivity. In schools, renewal time (often part of teachers' lunch break) may provide teachers with needed "down time" after the intensity of classroom instruction. "Teachers mostly

share—if they share anything—in the lunchroom. And in the lunchroom, it's basically about kids [rather than instruction]" (Jessie). Brief as renewal time is for teachers, talking with friends, complaining about student behavior, or just daydreaming seems to be a necessary and important use of time to help teachers relax and mentally prepare for the rest of the day.

Habitual time. Habitual time refers to the concept of time as habits that determine both how teachers' time is used and which activities are seen as discretionary. People often use their discretionary time in habitual ways. They also have habitual ways of prioritizing. For example, Nancy talked about not using e-mail because things were "too hectic" and e-mail was "just not a habit at this point...I'm not saying it's not a good idea. It's a really good idea, but it just takes time, and you can't teach old dogs new tricks."

Habits may lead people to work harder, not smarter, when new ideas or ways of doing things are perceived as additional responsibilities instead of opportunities to replace old ways of operating. Some teachers mentioned the difficulty of finding time to make teaching modules because of the district requirement to have printed lesson plans. These teachers are designing lesson plans in their habitual manner and using those lesson plans to design a module when, in fact, they could just use the Module Constructor to design a lesson and print it out. The Module Constructor is specifically designed to be flexible enough for teachers to construct lessons in their own style and in ways that meet school or district guidelines. A change in habit would mean one step instead of two.

School habits are also a part of habitual time (see Gersick & Hackman, 1990 for habitual routines of groups). For example, several teachers in this study

mentioned that teachers do not like to "interrupt during class time" to observe colleagues. Michael said he has not observed Nancy because "I certainly wouldn't want to go and break up Nancy's room while she is teaching." In settings where the habit of observing peers is seen as a normal part of teacher learning rather than an interruption, opportunities for teacher interaction are enhanced (see Little, 1982).

Discussion

As the most recent educational reform movement nears the end of its second decade, two issues have become clear. First, teachers need time for both individual and shared learning. Second, time is a vital condition for teachers as learners and for organizational change. The post-modern view of change involves "self-generation, transformation, [and] nonlinearity" (Doll, 1993, p. 78). Thus, the modernist, management view of time as a uniform, linear concept is unrealistic and inadequate for promoting teacher learning and achieving school change.

Teachers as learners. More than a decade ago, Sarason (1990) argued that failure of educational reform in America is predictable if schools do not become places where teachers, as well as students, can learn. Concurrently, the professionalization of teaching movement (e.g., The Holmes Group, 1986; 1990) also emphasized the need for career-long learning and collegial interactions for all teachers. By 1995, the U.S. Department of Education called on schools to focus on "individual, collegial, and organizational improvement," to make teacher learning an integral part of teachers' work, and to support teachers with "substantial time and other resources" (*Building Bridges*, 1995). The essential role of teacher learning in professionalizing teaching and achieving educational

reform was underscored again a year later in the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996).

One role of school administrators "is to identify and institute allocations and uses of teacher time which facilitate the realization of desired educational objectives" (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 304). Although the concept of teachers as learners became a major educational objective that was reflected in policies during the 1990s, school reforms in general did not include new and flexible models that could provide time for long-term, continuous teacher learning. Short-term solutions have been tried (see Raywid, 1993), but "schools are so resilient...that time and schedules remain largely unchanged" (Cambone, 1995, p. 517). Teachers presumably are expected to continue extending their professional and personal time to accommodate individual learning and the dissemination of knowledge (see Collinson, 1994). To counter such misguided expectations, administrators must be aware of the amount of time teachers need to assimilate the learning that each reform effort requires. If teachers are already running as fast as they can to meet their scheduled responsibilities, then administrators need to be realistic about how new reforms are balanced with older priorities. That is, when something new is added, something else must be subtracted.

As the teachers in the EELC project indicated, they are keen to learn and share with colleagues (also see Wasley, 1991). Not only did they volunteer to participate in the project, they articulated compelling reasons to learn, particularly because they believe technology can help their students. Yet the five most important barriers to their learning all centered on a lack of time. Time was such a barrier that teachers had to learn and share "on the fly." When time for

collegial learning and sharing is brief and hurried, teachers' questions, explanations, suggestions, and reflections remain superficial. This "use of snatched time for considering curricular issues must look to outsiders as an amateurish way for professional affairs to be conducted. ...Discussion of possible problems and approaches...needs a less harried, more thoughtful context than a school corridor or classroom" (Campbell, 1985, p. 162).

Finding time to support teacher learning and sharing remains a challenge. However, "additional time itself is no guarantor of educational change...How that time is used and interpreted also appears to be important" (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 306). In a recent study, researchers found a notable difference in schools that won awards for "quality" professional development: the balance of time. That is, unlike most schools, these award-winning schools valued and provided more opportunities for "informal" or individual learning than for "formal" or structured learning. Informal learning is "job-related, teacher-directed...continuous and unbound by rigorous time schedules" (Killion, 2000, p. 3). Formal learning was defined as not coordinated by teachers, "bound by time, organized around specific learning outcomes, frequently held outside the school setting, and not directly related to the daily work of teaching" (p. 3).

The teachers in the technology project also valued and preferred informal learning. Some of the teachers wanted individual, discretionary time to learn about the technology and feel comfortable with it before working more closely with colleagues. Their choice to first work alone might initially seem somewhat wasteful. However, even though teachers value their time so much that "unproductive" or "wasted" time is almost an anathema, Bruner argued that an excess or "waste" of time may be a necessary part of learning; "an individual

may well need to feel comfortable in regard to the knowledge possessed and the amount of time available before a new set of insights can emerge" (Doll, 1993, p. 78).

This study suggests that the combination of discretionary time for teachers to learn on their own and teacher-directed time designated for group learning and sharing is most beneficial. Thus, administrators should not be surprised when the "If you build it, they will come" style of management to provide designated time for learning proves ineffective. Teachers in the study noted that sharing does not happen through "osmosis" and that formal or designated time rarely includes time for sharing best practices. Increasing time for teachers to learn and share may be as much about creating an expectation for learning and an understanding that learning takes time as it is about scheduling time.

Re-Thinking Conceptions of Time

Many efforts to "make time" for individual and organizational learning (e.g., Raywid, 1993) reflect decades of management thinking of time as a single, linear concept. Thus, making time usually represents a reallocation of time such as adding five instructional minutes per day in order to "free up" a half day for learning. However, research already indicates that administrators can quickly "colonize" blocks of time designated for teacher learning (Hargreaves, 1990) or use them to discuss logistical or procedural issues (Collinson, 2000).

The importance of common time underscores the need to understand what teachers mean when they say, "I don't have enough time." In this study, the teachers who team taught and had the greatest amount of common time enjoyed some of the most sustained sharing with each other. If teachers say they need more time to learn and share, and administrators respond by creating more

discretionary time without changing teachers' opportunities to interact (e.g., during common time), teachers may well continue to say that they need more time. Additionally, administrators need to be careful when scheduling common time that the teachers perceive a need for sharing their learning. This study suggests that common time *and* common purpose in combination are much more likely to increase teacher sharing than either one alone. Administrators walk a thin line between creating opportunities to learn (e.g., common time) and mandating learning and sharing. Both administrator-created common time and designated time can easily fall prey to "contrived collegiality" (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990) if common purpose is absent.

A compounding factor of common time involves a lack of information about when other teachers are free to meet. If this situation applies to other schools, an easy way for administrators to create opportunities for more common time and potentially boost sharing among teachers is simply to provide teachers with a master schedule. Posting the master schedule may pose less risk of teacher comparisons and criticisms if teachers participate in designing the schedule.

Thinking about time as a uniform concept does not take into account the distribution of the many aspects of time the teachers identified or the dynamic interplay of forces that motivate or hinder teacher sharing. The teachers' conceptions of time clearly call for more flexibility of time to learn and share. Teachers in the United States spend more hours per week instructing students (student contact time) and fewer hours per week on professional learning and curriculum development than their peers in other developed nations (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Reducing the number of

teachers' instructional hours to increase time for learning and sharing could help alleviate the lack of discretionary time, uninterrupted time, unpressured time, and renewal time described by the teachers in this study.

In addition to needing more time to learn and share, teachers need time that is flexible and teacher-directed. One possibility for gaining discretionary time is Campbell's (1985) suggestion that each school receive a fixed annual amount of time specifically for teacher learning (i.e., in addition to the regular, allocated instructional and planning time). The staff as a whole would decide the use of learning time based on individual and group learning needs. In this study, for example, such a plan would have allowed the two most technically-inclined teachers time to help their colleagues set up the computers. Later, project participants could have shared the flexible time to surf the Web and incorporate technology into their instructional repertoire, to create lesson plans with the Module Constructor, or to learn from and with each other.

Finally, the old concept of time surrounding the perception of teachers as 9- or 10-month employees should be reconsidered. Earlier this year, Secretary Riley proposed that teachers become 12-month employees even though the academic year would not change. While Riley's aim is to raise teachers' salaries to levels commensurate with other professions requiring a similar educational background, the EELC study provides another argument for adopting his plan. The teachers in this study enjoyed some of their least pressured or interrupted learning during the summer. They also found time to learn and share with other colleagues, time that contributed to motivating them in ways they never experienced during the teaching year. Rethinking employment time could also

overcome teachers' difficulties in getting together with colleagues from other schools.

Conclusion

This study, like many before it, indicated that time is a major barrier to teacher learning and school change. Unlike other studies, however, this study explored what teachers mean when they talk about time. The teachers' interpretations indicated that time for them is multifaceted, complex, dynamic, and nonlinear. Until now, suggestions for providing time for teacher learning have generally represented a reallocation of time within a fixed schedule and have reflected a uniform conception of time.

The teachers' complex and interrelated interpretations of time call for nothing less than a radical rethinking of time that includes more flexibility in teachers' schedules and employment contract, allows more teacher-directed time for learning and sharing, reconsiders expectations and needs of teachers as learners, and recognizes the dynamic interplay of factors that encourage or hinder teacher learning and the dissemination of knowledge. Continuing to respond simplistically by "making time" within the confines of existing school schedules ignores teachers' multi-layered meanings when they say, "I don't have enough time." Rethinking current limitations of the traditional concept of time is a critical first step in promoting individual learning, and ultimately, meaningful organizational learning and school change.

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Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Name	School	Grade	Subject	Years	
				In Teaching	At Same School
Nancy	Maple	7th & 8th	Social Studies & Math	10	10
Michael	Maple	7th & 8th	Social Studies	12	6
Henry	Oak	8th	Social Studies	5	5
Irene	Oak	8th	Science	20	14
Jessie	Oak	6th	Special Ed. Science	20	3
Karen	Oak	6th	Science	6	6
Betty	Sycamore	7th	Life Science	28	28
Carl	Sycamore	6th	Science	19	10
Donna	Sycamore	6th	Geography	25	12
Ellen	Sycamore	8th	Science	23	14

Note. The following teachers team teach: Henry and Irene at Oak; Carl and Donna at Sycamore.